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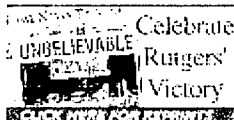
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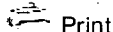
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## Old Bridge



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Old Bridge-owned land tests positive  
for lead

Home News Tribune Online 04/24/07

By JOHN MAJESKI  
 STAFF WRITER  
[jmajeski@thnt.com](mailto:jmajeski@thnt.com)

**OLD BRIDGE** — Testing on township-owned land eyed for preservation shows "unusually high lead levels," prompting officials to take measures to limit potential exposure to the public.

"While this is certainly nothing for residents to panic about, it is something that I want to ensure everyone is being given our full and immediate attention," Phillips said.

Additional testing is planned to determine the extent of the problem at the roughly 20-acre parcel along Margaret's Creek in Laurence Harbor. Phillips said steps have been taken to better restrict access to the site, while the township is working with county health officials and asking authorities to locate those responsible for the contamination.

Phillips said fencing along Route 35 has long restricted area use and illegal dumping. But now, the township is cutting off access from the beach along Raritan Bay by installing more fencing and additional signs.

A portion of the property is used by the Municipal Utilities Authority for a sewer-connect system.

Data assembled last week by the state Department of Environmental Protection shows "fairly substantial levels" of lead contamination in certain spots where a number of what appear to be car-battery casings were discovered, said Ed Putnam, assistant director of the DEP's site-remediation program. Putnam said the levels are high for normal soil yet consistent with other areas where battery casings are found.

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The DEP began testing because of discussions about the property possibly being purchased with state Green Acres funding, Putnam said.

Putnam said the results "certainly puts (preservation) on hold."

More testing will eventually be done to determine the extent of the contamination and to put a remediation plan in place, Putnam said.

"Right now we're concerned with people inadvertently getting into the area and being exposed," Putnam said.

The township acquired the marsh-surrounded land area — between Raritan Bay and Route 35 — in 1997 through foreclosure due to unpaid taxes. Phillips said the property was used as an industrial fill site decades ago.

Phillips said there is no record of the township testing the property for lead during its acquisition in 1997.

Putnam said exposure on the site could come through lead-contaminated dust.

A highly toxic chemical, lead was used for many years in products in and around homes, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Children 6 years old and younger are most at risk. Lead can cause a wide range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to seizures and death, according to the EPA.

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Everything Jersey

## The Star-Ledger

### Second lead site found in Old Bridge

Lawrence Harbor wall shows contamination

Thursday, August 16, 2007

BY ALLISON STEELE

Star-Ledger Staff

High levels of lead have been found in the soil in another area of Old Bridge, this time in a seawall along the Lawrence Harbor Beach.

It is the second property in the township to test positive this year for lead contamination. In April, tests performed on soil along nearby Margaret's Creek revealed similarly elevated levels. The contaminated areas have been closed off, and the state Department of Environmental Protection and the township have been conducting tests to determine the extent of the problem.

"We've been doing everything we can," said Township Administrator Michael Jacobs. "It's a concern, but it's something we're keeping a close eye on."

Long-term lead exposure can cause serious problems, including reproductive and nerve disorders in adults and permanent brain damage in children, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The contamination unearthed in April showed what township officials called "alarmingly high" levels of lead in the earth along Margaret's Creek. Lead levels were as high as 10 percent of the total soil composition in some spots, resulting from crushed battery casings left in the ground many years ago.

The state and township quickly moved to conduct water and air tests along that area, which Jacobs said have been encouraging. Air monitors have come back clear of lead dust in the air, and people have been asked to keep their motorcycles and ATVs away from the areas in question so as not to stir up anything.

"Right now it's staying where it is, which is the good news," Jacobs said.

The state is also in the process of conducting more testing, as well as contacting the company that is likely responsible for the lead. The township has paid for some testing thus far, but Jacobs hopes those costs can be reimbursed, and that the cleanup will be paid for by someone else.

In the meantime, township officials have been making sure everyone who lives near the contaminated sites is aware of the problem and stays away from the prohibited areas.

"We've been putting up signs, talking to neighbors, putting up fences," Jacobs said. "Whatever the state asks us to do, we do it right away."

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